

**From:** Blanc  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/14/02 2:56am  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

What is it called when there is centralized control of private enterprise?

What could be better for consumers than to have Big Brother sitting in Microsoft's office, at Microsoft's expense, watching every move it makes? What a great precedent for the future of business and the "free market" in the "free world"!

What could be better for fostering personal resolve, self-reliance, and independence of mind, than to have a "higher" agency make the decisions for OEMs, ISP, and OSPs who lack the courage to reject exclusionary agreements or refuse to do business under those terms, since otherwise they'll miss out on the large piles of money they're sure to make in the deal?

What could be better than knowing it is a crime to protect the integrity of products for which a company is liable, and that it is required by law to include the competition in the designs? Perhaps this country should also include a link to communism in its charter, to provide it equal opportunity to attract our attention and fealty.

If I owned Microsoft, I would say to hell with it - let them use Linux. After all, there is no obligation to continue producing this operating system, make improvements or add features to it, or creating new software applications - and all the while suffering imposed indignities in order to operate the business.

Nor are consumers obliged to continue using computers and software: these things are not like air or water or food, and large numbers of people hardly know how to use them. Those who do have become used to their benefits, with much thanks to Microsoft, among others. But it *is* possible to live without them: it was not so long ago that they did not exist as choices for the average consumer.

Where is the harm to consumers from products they are free to desist from using, when they are not required to go to the store and put their money down to buy any of them, but once having done so are at liberty to roam the internet and discover all sorts of other free downloadable software to use in replacement, limited only by their time and curiosity?

I have experienced no harm from using Microsoft's products, but this settlement, though less destructive than the previous proposal, makes me ill.

..  
Blanc Weber

